# The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
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No. 146 AUGUST 12TH, 1942

DEAR MEMBER,

A statement in a recent News-Letter that in the area of which the writer was speaking there were not as yet organizations for girls equivalent to the A.T.C., Home Guard or Army Cadets has brought a number of letters pointing out that this is not true generally. Here is one, which contains in addition some interesting information about what is being done for girls in the locality.

## SERVICES FOR GIRLS

"I expect you have already had letters pointing out that a Girls' Training Corps, a Junior Women's Air Cadet Corps, and a Ranger Pre-service Training Corps are already in being to meet the very real and widespread demand that came from the girls themselves. As I have been privileged to interview some 300 of these 16- and 17-year-olds under the boys' and girls' registration act, I would like to give you some impressions gained during this work. Out of the 300, 120 or so wanted to join the G.T.C. or Rangers, about 15 were attracted by the Young Farmers' Clubs, 25 by the Junior Red Cross. Of the remainder a large number said they would join village clubs, a few were attracted by the G.F.S. and the rest were in jobs such as munitions with deplorably long hours of work, or had to help at home in the evenings.

"We have co-ordinated all these activities in the hope that certain principles may be adhered to throughout. Some of our principles are these:

1. To take advantage of the widespread desire of the young people to share in the war effort by getting them to join some organization, but to keep in the forefront the idea that the training is not only—or even chiefly—to prepare them for war service, but mainly to prepare them for citizenship, which naturally involves a continuation after leaving school of education of mind, body and spirit.
2. With regard to the specialized pre-service training, to hold always in mind that the real difficulties of young girls in the Services are moral ones, in view of the abnormal conditions under which they must live. Therefore, the leaders should have as one of their first objectives the gaining of the confidence of the girls with a view to helping them in their real problems.
3. To specialize in physical training, hygiene, dietetics, cooking, etc., because indifferent health hinders spiritual and mental advance.
4. To realize that these youth organizations must provide a training in a social sense and opportunities for a wider circle of friends—two real needs that the interviews have revealed.

"It is very important to visualize the time that is coming when girls, many of them still under twenty, will be demobilized, and coming back to their own districts with the difficult task before them of adapting themselves to quite different conditions. The training corps ought to be ready for them, with the clear objective of helping these girls to feel that their co-operation is vitally needed in the building of a new world. Any training we give now must be worked out with that end in view. For this reason we should work closely with the evening institutes already existing, which have many facilities both educational and social.

"Our plan of campaign here is that the evening institutes and village clubs should pick up the 14-year-olds straight from school and prepare them for the A.T.C., G.T.C. etc., so as to close the fatal gap between 14 and 16. After the war, when, it is to be hoped, the school-leaving age will immediately be raised, the intellectual and spiritual activities of the training corps might be gradually transferred to the evening institutes.

" Meanwhile, the women's institutes could and will, I think, help enormously with the education of the parents, which is, perhaps, one of the most crying needs of the present situation. It seems to me that we are at last beginning to look at education as a whole, instead of as a specialized department for the school age, and therefore we must all co-operate—parents, schools, youth organizations, further education committees, women's institutes, churches and chapels.

" But our central purpose must be clear—to produce integrated personalities, capable of learning and greedy for knowledge, with sound, controlled bodies and with serene spirits receptive to the Divine."

## DR. ALBERT SCHWEITZER

News has reached this country from Dr. Albert Schweitzer, whose work at Lamberéné is in Free French territory, that the three doctors and the European nurses at the hospital are all well, though they are feeling the strain of a too prolonged sojourn in a trying climate. The chief problem in recent months has been supplying food for the large number of sick Africans.

For the benefit of the minority (as I suppose) of our members who do not know the name of Dr. Schweitzer, I may explain that his story is one of the most remarkable of the present century. Having devoted himself up to the age of thirty to scientific research and art, he made up his mind that the rest of his life must be given to the service of his fellow men, being convinced that the future of mankind depends on the readiness of men to give themselves to one another as human beings. He therefore entered on the long course of training as a doctor, in order to go as a medical missionary to the French Congo, where human need seemed to him to be as acute as anywhere in the world. By this time he had acquired an international reputation through the publication of a work on the history of research into the life of Christ, entitled *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, and as the author of a volume on Bach. His main support in carrying on his medical studies came from concerts given in the leading towns of Europe. During this period, and also later on his furloughs from Africa, he visited hundreds of churches on the continent and in this country to give advice and help in the preservation and restoration of organs. He has spent nearly thirty years in Africa, and amid his incessant labours in the maintenance and conduct of a hospital in an unhealthy climate he has found time to publish several important works on philosophy and the study of religion.

The Master of Balliol, who contributes this week's Supplement, has been from the beginning one of the warmest friends and most stimulating critics of the News-Letter. The group out of whose discussions the paper emerged is an experiment of great interest on account of the wide variety of different types of educational experience which it includes.

Yours sincerely,

J. H. Oldham

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THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.

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Published by Dr. J. H. Oldham for the Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life, and printed by the Church Army Press, Cowley, Oxford.